have been sanctioned under Grant-in-Aid Scheme while 2 projects with an outlay of Rs. 54.90 lakhs have been sanctioned under Technology Development, Extension and Training Scheme. These projects would be implemented in a period ranging from 3 to 5 years.

Pension schemes for rural poor

6526. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any high powered committee has been appointed to study possibility of pensions for the rural poor;

(b) if so, whether the formation of the committee is likely to delay and lead to grounding of the announced schemes; and

(c) by what time it is likely to submit its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The Committee has been set up to work out the details of the National Social Assistance Scheme.

(c) The Committee has been given three months time to submit the final report.

Integrated drinking water supply and environmental sanitation projects

6527. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the States where integrated drinking water supply and environmental sanitation projects will be taken up with the assistance from foreign countries; and

(b) by what time the aforesaid projects will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) Integrated Drinking Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Projects/ projects having components of sanitation and water supply are likely to be taken up with the assistance from World Bank/ foreign countries in the State of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

(b) The anticipated period of completion of the projects varies from 3 years to 10 years. However, as the projects are yet to be finalised the perscribed time of their commencement/ completion can not be indicated.

Arsenic pollution in ground water in West Bengal

6528. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the arsenic pollution in ground water in some parts of West Bengal is increasing;

(b) if so, whether the State Government have urged Union Government to have dialogue with foreign countries to control the ground water pollution; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS & EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI PATEL): (a) No systematic survey has so far been conducted by the Government of West Bengal. However, preliminary survey indicates that six districts namely: 24 Parganas (North), 24 Parganas (South), Nadia, Burdwan, Murshidabad and Malda with population of 302. 767 lakhs are affected by arsenic pollution.

(b) and (c) The Government of West Bengal has submitted a project to the